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Testimony in Support of HB 5540- AN ACT CONCERNING THE ARREST POWER OF SWORN MEMBERS OF LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS.

**Public Safety Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
February 7, 2013**

I would like to thank the Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Joan Hartley and Representative Stephen Dargan, the Honorable Vice Chairs Senator Andres Ayala and Representative Joe Verrengia, and the Ranking Members Senator Anthony Guglielmo and Representative Jan Giegler, and the entire membership of the Public Safety Committee for their time this afternoon addressing this issue. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in favor of HB 5540.

The standing practice of only allowing sworn police officers to have felony arrest powers outside on their municipality has been a concern for many years and has been before this committee numerous times. Yet today officers face ambiguity when serving warrants, participating in mutual aid situations, and just in making a choice to enforce state law when the officer witnesses an infraction.

During my conversations with officers who have been involved in mutual aid in Newtown, the need to change this policy has never been clearer. While local municipalities have used mutual aid agreements, there has been a legitimate need for police support from communities not normally covered by mutual aid agreements. In addition, due to the extended nature of the support local departments are giving to Newtown, officers are concerned about their legal standing if there is ever an incident.

A mentor said to me once, "treat people like adults, they will act like adults." I understand there are concerns that members of police departments could abuse the ability to make arrests in other municipalities. To this I say we allow our chiefs and state police to work together and trust our state trained police officers to exercise their judgment. We need to protect those who protect us by putting the turf war behind us and give our officers the peace of mind they deserve.

Thank you again for allowing me to present testimony to the committee.